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Asbury Theological Seminary-Orlando Campus

ST650 Narrative Theology – Fall 2003

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Please check for the latest version of this syllabus prior to the beginning of class.

The Fine Print ;-) "This extended learning syllabus is intended for distribution to members of the course only (and not for general distribution on the internet!). If you intend to share part of this material with others you need to ask for permission."

Course Description

This course intends to explore the limits and possibilities of the 'narrative' approach to theological reflection. Our analysis will take its cue from the post-modern critique of method, foundation and systematization in Theology and Philosophy from which the interest in narrative and story have initially emerged. We shall look in turn at various understandings of 'narrative theology' as the category is employed in a number of theological accounts and critically assess their claims and performance. Along the way we shall also engage in 'narrative theological reflection' ourselves, by looking at a number of well-known biblical passages and consider their meaningfulness for the present theological reflection in general, their peculiar response to the post-modern concerns in particular.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the category of narrative theology, its general aims and concerns as well as its specific employment in various theological accounts.
2. Better evaluate the potential problems of systematic theology in terms of both its hidden reliance upon fashionable ideologies and its connection with the first order language of the Bible.
3. Engage in, and appreciate narrative and literary criticism as useful tools in the study of the Bible.
4. Articulate and defend a theological understanding of history vis-à-vis the post-modern critique of totality.
5. Appreciate, articulate and discern among various understandings of 'truth' in the biblical narratives; appreciate the importance of both story and

- history; articulate the perennial importance of reference for theological reflection.
6. Identify the possibilities and limits of the narrative approach in the context of both the living confession of the Church and the history of Dogma.

Required Reading

Brown, Robert M. "My Story and 'The Story'" in *Theology Today*, v. 23, #2, 1975 (available in digital format)

Erickson, Millard, *Christian Theology*, Baker Book House, 1998. pp. 17-84; 158-175;

Fackre, Gabriel. "Narrative Theology: An Overview." *Interpretation* 37 (October 1983): pp. 340-52.

Grenz J. Stanley & Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology*, Carlisle, Patternoster Press, 1991. pp. 271-285;

Grenz, J. Stanley & John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism. Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. esp. pp. 28-54.

Hauerwas Stanley & Gregory Jones, editors *Readings in Narrative Theology*, , Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997. pp. 21-44; 65-112; 158-215; 263-347;

Heschel, J. Abraham, *The Prophets*, Perennial Press, 2001. Introduction; pp. 202-237;

Ille, George, *Hermeneutical Explorations of Agency as Prolegomena for a Theological Epistemology*, PhD Thesis, King's College, University of London, 2000) (selections in digital format).

Jenson, Robert, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. pp. 3-23.

Jungel, Eberhardt, Metaphorical Truth. Reflections on theological metaphor as a contribution to a hermeneutics of narrative theology in Jungel, *Theological Essays*. Translated and edited by J. B. Webster, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989.

Loughlin, Gerard, *Telling God's Story*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 3-26; 223-245;

Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *The Postmodern Condition*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984. The First 5 Chapters; (digital copy available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/lyotard.htm>)

McClendon, James W. Jr. 'More On Narrative' (available in digital format)

McClendon, James W. Jr. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. New Edition. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990. pp. 1-23.

Murphy, Nancey, *Beyond Fundamentalism and Liberalism. How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda*, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996. pp. 1-35; 36-61;

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *The Meaning of Revelation*, New York: McMillan Publishing Inc., 1941.

Powell, Mark Allan, *What Is Narrative Criticism* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship. New Testament Series), Fortress Press, 1991. pp. 35-50;

Rad, von Gerhard, *The Message of the Prophets*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967. pp. 89-101;

Ricoeur, Paul, Christianity and the Sense of History in *History and Truth* : essays translated, with an introd., by Charles A. Kelbley. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1965.

Ricoeur, Paul, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* by Paul Ricoeur with an introduction by Lewis S. Mudge, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. pp. 73-180.

Ricoeur, Paul, *Figuring the Sacred*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. - selections (pp. 35-47; 144-166; 203-278.)

Ricoeur, Paul, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* edited, translated and introduced by John. B. Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. pp. 43-62; 165-181;

Schwobel, Christoph, editor. *Trinitarian Theology Today*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995. pp. 1-30; 147-170;

Stroup, W. George, *The Promise of Narrative Theology. Recovering the Gospel in the Church*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997.

Thiselton, C. Anthony. *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995. pp. 3-43.

Thiselton, C. Anthony. *The Two Horizons. New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. pp. 293-356;

Wisse, Maarten, Narrative Theology and the Dogmatic Use of the Bible. (available in digital form - Utrecht University MWisse@theo.uu.nl).

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Divine Discourse*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. pp. 240-296;

Wright, N.T. *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992. pp. 47-80; 371-417

Recommended Reading

Alter, Robert *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Basic Books; Reprint edition, 1983.

Barth, Karl *Church Dogmatics*, I,1; I,2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956) esp. Introduction. Chapter 1.

Brueggemann, Walter *The Bible and Post-Modern Imagination*. London: SCM Press, 1993.

Brunner, Emil, *Revelation and Reason*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1946. pp. 3-57; 412-430;

Crossan, John Dominic *The Dark Interval: Toward a Theology of Story*. Niles, Ill.: Argus Communications, 1975.

Derrida, Jacques, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, University of Chicago Press; Reprint edition (May 1994) pp. 108-171;

Farrow, Douglas *Ascension and Ecclesia*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1996. Preface, Chapter 1;

Frei, Hans *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, Cambridge: Yale University Press, 1980. esp. pp. 267-304;

Goldberg, Michael *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction*, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001.

Kung, Hans & Tracy, David *Paradigm Change in Theology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989. esp. pp. 261-306.

Marshall, Bruce, *Trinity and Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. pp. 1-16; 242-282;

McFague, Sallie *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

McFague, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. pp. 1-66; 117-144

Ricoeur, Paul *Oneself as Another*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. pp. 1-26; 169-296.

Ricoeur, Paul *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. pp. 193-274.

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Rule of Metaphor*, translated by Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. Introduction; Study 8

Soskice-Martin, J. *Metaphor and Religious Language*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Stellardi, Giuseppe *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought* (Philosophy and Literary Theory), Humanity Books, 2000. pp. 67-116.

Swinburne, Richard *Revelation. From Metaphor to Analogy*, pp. 39-51.

Thiemann, Ronald. *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1984. Part II.

Vanhoozer, J. Kevin. *Is there a Meaning in this Text?*, Leicester: Apollos, 1998.

Watson, Francis *Text, Church and World*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994. pp. 221-294.

Other materials (articles, reviews, book selections) may be made available during the course (in digital form).

Course Schedule

Lecture 1

Introduction

The Categories of Narrative Theology. Historical overview. Philosophical and Theological aspects.

What is special about Narrative Theology? What are its concerns and who are its most representative proponents? These and similar questions will be discussed in the context of the contemporary critique of modernity and its implications for theology.

Required reading

George Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology*, pp. 13-97;

Stanley J. Grenz & Roger Olson, *20th Century Theology*, pp. 271-285;

Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, pp. 3-26

Fackre, Gabriel. "Narrative Theology: An Overview." *Interpretation* 37 (October 1983): 340-52.

Recommended reading

Hans Kung & David Tracy, *Paradigm Change in Theology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989. esp. pp. 261-306.

Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction*, Wipf & Stock Publishers; 2001.

No writing assignments are required for the first meeting.

Lecture 2

Systematic Theology and Modernity. Conservative and Liberal Theologies. Method and Foundation. The Philosophical and Theological Premises of Systematization. Descartes, Locke and Kant. Post-modernity and the Critique of method.

We shall inquire into Systematic Theology's connection with Modernity especially its emphasis on method. Is there a foundation? How can we discuss theologically about 'founding'? What are the implications of systematization? Can we 'synthesize' the Bible in a series of 'fundamental/overarching statements'?

Study Case. Erickson's Systematic Theology; Robert Jenson's Systematic Theology;

Required reading

Nancy Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, pp. 1-35;

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, pp. 17-84;158-175;
Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 3-23;

Recommended reading

Stanley Grenz & John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, pp. 28-54;

Lecture 3

Post-Modernity and the philosophy of language.

Epistemology and Hermeneutics. Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel;

From regional to general hermeneutics (Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur).

Theological implications;

We shall take a closer look at the revolt against epistemology and the 'dissolution of method' in post-modern thought. Particular attention shall be given to the contemporary focus on hermeneutics. Is epistemology as a science passé? What can we say theologically about the present situation?

Required reading

Paul Ricoeur, The Task of Hermeneutics in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, pp. 43-62;

Anthony C. Thieselton, *Interpreting God and the Post-Modern Self*, pp. 3-43;

Anthony C. Thieselton, *The Two Horizons*, pp. 293-326;

Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*. pp. 36-61;

Recommended reading

Anthony C. Thieselton, *The Two Horizons*.

Anthony C. Thieselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*

Kevin, J. Vanhoozer, *Is there a Meaning in this Text?* pp. 455-467.

Lecture 4

The theological response to the epistemological crisis. 'Revelational theologies'; Brunner, Barth, Niebuhr.

The Plurivocity of Biblical Revelation; Foundation, Method and Genre;

Is emphasis on Revelation the proper response to the present epistemological crisis? How should we speak about Revelation in general, Biblical Revelation in particular?

Required reading

George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology*, pp. 39-69;

H. Richard Niebuhr *The Meaning of Revelation*, New York: McMillan Publishing Inc., 1941.

Paul Ricoeur, Towards a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation, in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*.

Recommended reading

Karl Barth *CD 1.1*; Introduction, Chapter 1;

Emil Brunner *Revelation and Reason*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1946. pp. 3-57; 412-430;

Anthony C. Thieselton *Interpreting God and the Post-modern Self*. Part IV.

Lecture 5

Story and History. Reviving 'the big ugly ditch' (Lessing)?

Funk, Via, Crossan and the New Hermeneutic.

Study Case – The Parables of Jesus;

What does the category of narrative tell us about the relationship between story and history, fact and meaning? What can be said theologically about the claims and concerns of the New Hermeneutic movement?

Required reading

The Parables of Jesus.

Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship. New Testament Series), Fortress Press, 1991. pp. 35-50

Anthony C. Thieselton, *The Two Horizons*, pp. 327-356;

Paul Ricoeur, The Bible and the Imagination, in *Figuring the Sacred*, pp. 144-166;

N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992. pp. 47-76;

Recommended reading

Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, Cambridge: Yale University Press, 1980. esp. pp. 267-304;

John Dominic Crossan *The Dark Interval: Toward a Theology of Story*.

Niles, Ill.: Argus Communications, 1975.

Lecture 6

History and Totality revisited I.

Salvation History and Narrativity;

Study Case1 – Christ, Wisdom literature and the dialectic of universal and particular;

Study Case 2 – The Prophetic Vision: History and Counter-History;

It is often contended that concern with grand categories like a philosophy or a theology of history, necessarily entails a totalitarian perspective, a 'closing' of history. Is that really the case in the light of Biblical revelation? We shall look at the way the Bible looks at the world focusing especially on two biblical genres: wisdom literature and prophetic discourse.

Required reading

Proverbs 8; Jeremiah 18; Isaiah 55; Amos

Paul Ricoeur, The Summoned Subject in the School of the Narrative of the Prophetic Vocation in *Figuring the Sacred*, pp. 262-278;

Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets*, Perennial Press, 2001. Introduction; pp. 202-237;

N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992. pp. 280-339;

Gerhard von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967. pp. 89-101;

Recommended reading

Walter Brueggemann, *The Bible and Post-Modern Imagination*. London: SCM Press, 1993.

Lecture 7

History and Totality revisited II.

Word, Action and History. Towards a theological understanding of history;

Study case – Genesis narratives

We shall continue our reflections from the previous course looking this time at the Genesis narratives. Is 'God's eye perspective' an impossible interpretative stance? Moreover, how do we relate this latter perspective with the narrative's tacit ambition to mediate between theory and praxis, story and history, sense and reference, meaning and significance?

Required reading

Genesis 12-50;

Paul Ricoeur, Christianity and the Sense of History in *History and Truth* : essays translated, with an introd., by Charles A. Kelbley. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1965.

Paul Ricoeur, Toward a Narrative Theology: Its Necessity, Its Resources, Its Difficulties in Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred* pp. 236-248

Paul Ricoeur, Hope and the Structure of Philosophical Systems, in *Figuring the Sacred*, pp. 203-216;

Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, pp. 240-296;

Recommended reading

Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Basic Books; Reprint edition, 1983.
Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1996. Preface, Chapter 1;
Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. pp. 193-274.

Lecture 8

Metaphor and Concept. Philosophical and Theological aspects (Hegel, Heidegger, Derrida, Ricoeur).
Study Case 1 – John 6;

There has been much discussion about metaphor in recent times. Post-modern critique of metaphysics has led to a re-evaluation of traditional theories of meaning. We shall look at the nature of this development and its implications for Narrative Theology.

Required reading

Eberhard Jungel, Metaphorical Truth. Reflections on theological metaphor as a contribution to a hermeneutics of narrative theology in Jungel, *Theological Essays*. Translated and edited by J. B. Webster, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989.
Paul Ricoeur, Metaphor and the Central Problem of Hermeneutics in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, pp. 165-181
Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 223-245;

Recommended reading

Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, University of Chicago Press; Reprint edition (May 1994) pp. 108-171;
McFague, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. pp. 1-66; 117-144
J. Soskice-Martin. *Metaphor and Religious Language*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
Sallie McFague *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
Paul Ricoeur. *The Rule of Metaphor*, translated by Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.
Introduction; Study 8
Richard Swinburne. *From Metaphor to Analogy*, pp. 39-51.

Giuseppe Stellardi, *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought* (Philosophy and Literary Theory), Humanity Books, 2000. pp. 67-116.

Lecture 9

The Promise of Narrative Theology I
Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology.
On Naming God
Study Case – Exodus 3.

Theology's paramount focus is the reality and being of God. Given the plurivocity of biblical revelation, how are we to talk about God's revealed Name? Does Narrative Theology offer a better guide in our attempt to unfold this profound ontological question? Does Narrative Theology really have a special status in Theology or is it simply a tool for recounting the passage from biblical to systematic theology?

Required reading

Exodus 3;
Paul Ricoeur, Naming God in *Figuring the Sacred*, pp. 217-235.
David Ford, System, Story, Performance: A Proposal about the Role of Narrative in Christian Systematic Theology in *Readings in Narrative Theology*, S. Hauerwas & Gregory Jones, editors, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997. pp. 191-215.

Recommended reading

Paul Ricoeur, Philosophy & Religious Language in *Figuring the Sacred*. pp. 35-47
Francis Watson, *Text, Church and World*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994. pp. 221-294.

Lecture 10

The Promise of Narrative Theology II
Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology. Historiography and Gospel.
Study Case – the Gospel of Mathew

We shall evaluate the special place of the Gospel as narrative among the Biblical genres and its connection with both Biblical and Systematic Theology. What is 'special' about the Gospel? How does the Gospel 'name' God?

Required reading

Ronald Thiemann, The Promising God: The Gospel as Narrated Promise, in *Readings in Narrative Theology*, S. Hauerwas & Gregory Jones, editors, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997. pp. 320-347;
N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992. pp. 384-389;

Recommended reading

Ronald Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1984. Part II.
Mark Allan Powell. *What Is Narrative Criticism* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship. New Testament Series); Fortress Press, 1991. pp. 35-50;
Ricoeur, Paul. *The Reality of the Historical Past*, The Aquinas Lecture, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1984.

Lecture 11

The Promise of Narrative Theology III
Narrative Theology and Anthropology. Narrative Identity, Biography and Testimony
Study case - Hebrews 11
McClendon's Biography as Theology;

What is the place of narrative identity in a 'criteriology of Revelation?' Is Narrative Identity or the notion of testimony central to Narrative Theology? Moreover, is Narrative Theology intrinsically tied to anthropological categories?

Required reading

Hebrews 11
H. Richard Niebuhr, The Story of Our Life in *Readings in Narrative Theology*, S. Hauerwas & Gregory Jones, editors, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997. pp. 21-44.
James W. McClendon. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. New Edition. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990. pp. 1-23.
James W. McClendon, Jr. 'More On Narrative' (available in digital format)
Brown, Robert M. "My Story and 'The Story'" in *Theology Today*, v. 23, #2, 1975 (available in digital format)
Paul, Ricoeur, The Hermeneutics of Testimony, in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* by Paul Ricoeur with an introduction by Lewis S. Mudge, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. pp. 119-154.

Recommended reading

McClendon, James Wm. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. New Edition. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.
Stroup, The Promise of Narrative Theology, pp. 99-198

Lecture 12

The Promise of Narrative Theology IV

Narrative Theology, Imagination and Ethics. Narrative identity, character and community.

Personal Identity cannot be separated from the field of action, therefore, from ethics. The deeper connection between narrative identity and community shall be explored in this course and the way in which the concept of narrative bridges the ethical aim (the teleological perspective) with the moral norm (the deontological perspective).

Required reading

Stanley Hauerwas & Gregory Jones, editors. *Reading in Narrative Theology*, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997. pp. 65-112; 158-190; 263-319.
George Ille, *Hermeneutical Explorations of Agency as Prolegomena for a Theological Epistemology*, PhD Thesis, King's College, University of London, 2000) (Review of *Oneself as Another*; selections provided in digital format).

Recommended reading

Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. pp. 1-26; 169-296.

Lecture 13

Narrative Theology, Trinity and Truth. Concluding remarks;
Study Case: The Gospel of John.

How is Narrative Theology related to, say, Trinitarian Theology or Process Theology? Is Narrative Theology better able to express the dynamic character of the Gospel for the contemporary world? If so, how and in what sense? This concluding course will explore such and similar questions in our attempt to situate the specific discourse of Narrative Theology within the broader field of Theology.

Required reading

Michael Goldberg, God, Action and Narrative: Which Narrative? Which Action? Which God? in *Reading in Narrative Theology*, pp. 348-365.

Christoph Schwobel, editor. *Trinitarian Theology Today*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995. pp. 1-30;147-170;

Maarten Wisse, Narrative Theology and the Dogmatic Use of the Bible. (available in digital form - Utrecht University MWisse@theo.uu.nl).

Recommended reading

Bruce Marshall, *Trinity and Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. pp. 1-16;242-282;

Requirements and expectations

You are expected to complete the required reading prior to class session and to produce a written assignment. Specific instructions for both the required reading and the written assignment will be given for each class.

During the course, three additional essay questions/topics will be posted. The student is expected to treat ONE topic or answer ONE question only (at his or her choosing). The length of the essay will not exceed 2,500 words.

Assessment and Grading

40 percent of the grade will be constituted by the assignment(s) for each lecture and by the level of interaction in the class. (15% for the level of interaction and 35% for the assignments).

The long essay that will conclude the course will make the other 50% of the grade.

I am including below the standards for grading from the seminary catalog.

A 4 = *Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives*

B 3 = *Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives*

C 2 = *Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives*

D 1 = *Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives*

F 0 = *Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives*

Please note that for 'good, solid work' you get the grade of B. In order to get a grade of A, you must produce exceptional work, that surpasses the objectives of the course; That usually translates into a combination of the following:

- Well researched and comprehensive analysis and criticism that goes beyond what is required for the assignment.
- Work that is exceptionally articulated, well structured and concise;
- Insightful and creative work that includes elaborate and profound interaction with the material and advances the present discussions on the subject matter.

Following are the types of issues that devalue a paper listed in the order of their importance.

- Faulty logic; incoherence; lack of discernment in evaluating what is at stake in the argument; answering a different question;
- Insufficient interaction with the material; insufficient research; weak argument; poor structure
- Grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, etc; While I am mainly interested in content issues, persistent grammatical and spelling errors will reduce your grade.

Regarding the writing standards you may want to follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Particular attention should be given to argument construction, outline, the standard of language expected in a paper as well as the proper way of referencing resources. If you plan to work hard anyway, it would be a pity to miss helpful hints on impressing your professor with your wide-ranging erudition:-)

The due date for the final essay is December 16.